

Message on the Observance of Independence Day, 1996

July 2, 1996

I am pleased to join my fellow Americans across the nation and around the world in celebrating Independence Day.

On this day each year, we gather with family and friends to commemorate the anniversary of the signing of our Declaration of Independence. With vision and courage, our Founders stated unequivocally to the world: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness." These were literally revolutionary concepts, and they fundamentally changed the course of human history.

Today we are living through another period of profound and historic change—change in the way we work, the way we live, the way we relate to one another and to the rest of the world. But the truths set down in our Declaration of Independence are immutable, and they continue to light our path into the challenges and possibilities of the future. Equality, individual rights, life, freedom, opportunity—we still cherish these values, and we must continue to reaffirm them daily.

America is a work in progress, and we have strived through decades of challenge and change to become what our Founders envisioned on our first Independence Day. As we continue that endeavor, let us work together to create an America that remains the world's strongest force for peace, justice, and freedom. Let us work for an America that is not driven apart by differences but instead is united around shared values and respect for our diversity. Let us work for an America in which every one of us, without regard to race or religious belief or gender or station in life, can achieve our dreams. In this way we will best pay tribute to those who, 220 years ago, pledged their lives, their fortunes, and their sacred honor to guarantee our freedom.

Best wishes for a memorable Fourth of July.

Bill Clinton

Remarks at a Reception for Representative Dick Durbin in Chicago

July 2, 1996

The President. Thank you very much.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. Thank you. Well, if we get them, they'll be a lot better if Dick Durbin is in the Senate, I'll tell you that.

First of all, I'm delighted to be here with Senator Simon and Senator Carol Moseley-Braun, my good friend Bill Singer, and all of you who have contributed to this terrific fundraiser. I want to say how very much I admire Dick and Loretta Durbin—they live their family values, they don't just give political speeches about them at election time—and how happy I am to be here at this—[*applause*].

When Dick was talking about being a Lithuanian, I was just thinking that the Chicago person in my household would like to be here tonight. But when we were in France for the G-7 meeting, and I left Hillary, and she went on to Romania, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Estonia, and two or three other places. And she called me yesterday, and she told me about her day in Romania. And she told me—she said, "You realize all the places I'm going, all the people I'm going to see?" And she reeled them all off. And I said, "Look, I can make one trip to Chicago and see people from all those places."

So Dick reminded me of my wisecrack, and I thought I'd give it to you. [*Laughter*] It's really true about Chicago; it's one of the things that makes it so wonderful. The mayor and Bill Daley took me down to the Taste of Chicago today, and I walked, and I ate like a horse. [*Laughter*] But I was an equal opportunity eater. I gave—every ethnic group got a fair and equal shot at me. And I'll have to run an extra 5 miles in the morning, but it was wonderful.

Let me say on a more serious note how much I appreciate the support I felt from all the American people when I went to Europe to try to get our allies to support the United States in our fight against terrorism in the aftermath of what happened in Saudi Arabia to our Air Force personnel. But I also